



FOR TEENS & PARENTS

SERIES: IDENTITY CRISIS

WHO AM I?

QUESTION EVERY TEENS (10-18 YRS) ASK: DR ROBIN F. GOODMAN
ONLY 2% OF WOMEN THINK THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL
GIRLS: LOW SELF-ESTEEM 82%
MOST SUICIDES RECORDED



RICHMONDAKHIGBE



SCHOOLOFSTRATEGICCOACHING@GMAIL.COM



DON'T LET ANYONE FOOL YOU, with the advent of social media and breakthroughs in science and technology, the world is gradually becoming a global street. And the internet has shaped our education and cultural scope. From business to sports, from politics to social landscape. The virtual world of social media is gradually gaining popularity. It is now two worlds apart. The Cyber and Real world. As if the challenges of comparing ourselves is not enough, we are consummated with the blings and glams of Cyber life that we compare ourselves with people we have little or no idea about their present realities. Most teens all over the world are flood the social media landscape and comparing themselves with their counterparts, using slangs like 'slayest' or 'kingest' so to speak. Those things you see or they say, does not make them true. Don't flood your timelines and feeds with obscene pictures just to prove a point. And just so you know, most organization go through pages of their applicants to see whether they are fit for the positions. The truth is, whether you accept it or not, your social pages define who you are.

A survey conducted by *Statista* shows an astronomical increase from 2014 with 34% *Instagram* users between ages 25 and 34 to over 65% *Instagram* users in 2017. But the 2018 survey again shows that between ages 16 to 24, there is an increased use of *Tumblr*, *Instagram*, *Youtube* and *Twitter* having the highest users when compared with age brackets 25-34 and 35-44. With the above statistics it is obvious that the majority of social media platforms were teens. Mostly between ages 14 to 18. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2018 shows a majority of Americans use Facebook and YouTube, but young adults are especially heavy users of Snapchat and Instagram. Younger Americans stand out for embracing a variety of platform multiple times per day. Similarly, 71% of Americans in this age group now use Instagram and close to half 45% are Twitter users. In the survey I conducted last year 2017, 7 out of very 10 teens between ages 10-18 use any of these platforms, facebook, instagram, twitter, tumblr, snapchat or others.

Scamming is on the rise with more users of social platforms, and teens are now forced to either put up a front that is deceitful or lack the know how as their accounts are being hacked. People put up what they want to put up. They make-believe which can be completely falsified, and teens have become victims of these persons. With several different pictures enhancing Apps, everybody is a cutie. Brand Vela, 18, killed herself when she pulled the trigger after she has had several cyberbullies. Her account was hacked and wrong account was created for her. She

REAL SELF VS CYBER SELF



Many cases of teens who have lost their lives to cyberbullying in a bid to impress people, they resort to body exposures and going to the extremes to do nonsense online including putting up whole new different personality which is a far cry from who they are in the real world. And victims often experience Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD).

All been said, don't allow your life to be controlled by social media. It is a front that is completely falsified. Users only show you the good side of their lives. showing off their expensive cars, mansions and blings. Don't get fooled! There are a lot of bad sides you never get to know about them. Don't measure your life in a timeline. Don't compare yourself with someone else's opinion. Don't let social media determine how you behave or look. And as a teen, you have a whole lot to do in determining the kind of adult you become. There is a whole lot of possibilites ahead of you. Don't lounge all day in social media platforms and forget the essence, the reason why you are in this world. Don't allow anybody dictate for you just because their social handles look great. At the end of the day, it is about what makes you happy. What gives you this inner peace and joy. You can focus your mind on things that are productive and purposeful. However, you can use the social media in a positive way, by communicating with people you know and who have positive vibes too.

You must be able to define who you are, or people who define who you are not. Tell yourself how marvelous you are, Your unique purpose on earth. Think about how important you are in this world. How your life can change the ills in the society. Look, don't view and perceive yourself by the standards of the society. Actually those standards are people's opinions and judgements. The mirror of the society is perversed by cultures, laws, religion and opinionated truths. Whatever that is pure, good, and brings you joy and fulfilment, find yourself doing those. Have you ever seen someone so fat, and then enters a place, there is this look that everyone gives, because they believe that it is not the acceptable norm or look. What about your skin color? Stereotypes in our society. So, the truth is people will always talk about you, no matter how you look. You must deafen your ears like the story of the deaf frog. The frog decided to climb a tree, and all other frogs kept shouting, impossible, impossible, to the frog, he thought they were cheering him. So he went ahead and made it. Shut your ears and mind from the noise of hate, resentment and negativism.

CASE STUDY I



JANE after posting a picture of her in her favourite dress. She was expecting to have a lot of her friends to like her picture and comment her much they love the dress and her in the dress. Unfortunately, she only got a few likes and was cyberbullied by someone who mocked her in the dress.

If you were the one what will you do?

Would you let that depress you? If No, explain.

What do you do with your social platform(s)?

How many hours do you spend on it/them?

Do you think it has influenced you negatively? List some ways.

SELF-WORTH: LOVE YOURSELF



IF YOU DON'T LOVE YOURSELF, NOBODY ELSE IS GOING TO LOVE YOU. The value you put on yourself is exactly what people will give back to you. When you see yourself as a fool, stupid and a failure, guess what, that is what will be thrown at you like a stray dog. Most teens see themselves as too fat, ugly, very slim, so short, kind of too tall, and they hate the way they look so much that some don't even take photos. Just because your best friend says that you are too fat, you lock yourself in your room and cry all day. No, if your friend does not love you the way you are, he/she does not deserve you. Just move on! Sometimes, those friends have identity crisis too. A drowning man don't want to drown alone. People with identity crisis are always quick to judge and condemn other people. Don't sweat it, who cares? Find for yourself people who believe in you. Don't try to fit in. It's not your size and make. Beat it! Cases of low self esteem always make victims isolate themselves (self-withdrawal), and the height of it all is that, they commit suicides. So if you are in the game of pulling people down and careless with your words, take yield, as your next word is as important as someone's feelings and emotions. Caregivers should be very careful the words you say to these teens. Don't always compare your children with other children. What you are simply telling them is that, they are not good enough.

As posited by Ferdinand Tonnies in his *gemeinschaft* and *geleschaft* concept which was later watered down by the German sociologist, Georg Simmel in the late nineteenth century into dyad and triad relationship concept, he described it as an association of two people who share common interest. So if it is a three-friend relationship we could say triad as the case can be. As a group of friends, there is usually the influencer in the group. In this situation, everyone in the group emulate the influencer knowingly or not. There is that one person who we look up to. In a sense we might call it a mini mentor, although it is not usually perceived this way. If you have ever noticed your child since he/she started hanging out with a friend or group of friends that there are some certain attitudes he/she puts up now that makes you to wonder where he got it from. It could be positive. But it is usually on the contrary most times. Even as adults, we experience this rub-off too, in cases where we start saying some certain words or lingo unconsciously. Sometimes whilst we are freshening up in the bathroom, occasions and events of the day starts to condense in our minds. Teens are always at risk when they find themselves in company of bad influencer. They come home feeling how Jane could have done it if she was here. How John would look more handsome because he has a dark beautiful skin. Mary fits better in dresses than I do. How Meg's mum threw her a big party....

SELF-WORTH: LOVE YOURSELF



So, all of these makes the child starts putting up certain strange behaviours. Cases of abuses have ALWAYS resulted from confidentiality. Children tends to find a figure in their lives who is always there for them. Ready to talk to them. Someone who understands them and their feelings. Their heads are young and process information faster than an average adult. As a parent you must make conscious efforts to know who that influencer is by deliberately getting into their business. Unfortunately most parents have no idea and instead, they complain and curse. Making matters even worse. By so doing, you are pushing he/she to go find someone who could listen and understand. Worse of it all the influencer. When your child starts to keep things from you, it is because he/she does not trust you enough to be able to deal with it. Or you might kick against it even before they share it with you.

Teens could develop low-self esteem from several reasons and events. For example, over praising could be a major cause. When they do well, you shower praises on them and when they make just a single mistake you go bazooka. this kind of praise is termed 'unlabelled praise' because they start to feel completely not good enough. And self-destruct is activated in the forms of depression, self-withdrawal, moodiness, fear and so on. A whole lot of emotions and counter-emotions go on in this phase of their lives. It is very important to train up a child in the way he should grow, but it is equally very important not to provoke them to wrath. Wrath in this sense could be you pushing them to the point where their lives is on the line and they go self-destruct. Many of us could either be the propeller of whom our children become or the loop that slip their necks.

Again what brings about low or decayed self-worth for teens is the kind of communications they hear in their homes. Don't you ever complain about money in the presence of your children. It is psychological. They grow up feeling they are poor. A child once came to the mom and asked; "mum! Are we poor?" That was after she was among the children who were sent home because of their school fees. She heard her teacher saying poor people can not afford school fees in a social studies class. And kept hearing complaints everyday from either mom or dad. Again, the act of comparing your children with other children. "How come you came out 5th, does Joshua has two heads?" No, you are killing that child personality. Although some children improve after such scolding, but a seed of comparison has been planted in him. He will want to outperform Joshua because he is comparing himself him, and not for other obvious reasons.

CASE STUDY II



SOLOMON overheard mom and dad yelling at each other as he heard dad complaining bitterly about how work has not been productive for months now. Mom hinted that foodstuffs were finished. Solomon could not afford to go with his classmates for an excursion two weeks ago. And his teacher is already complaining about his book not being complete. The teacher even said, ‘are you the poorest in the class?’ in the presence of his classmates. He is beginning to see himself poor. And low self-esteem is gradually setting in. He now avoids his friends as he is constantly been given money by them for snacks during recess.

What advice do you have for SOLOMON?

Do you think this will lead to low self-esteem? What could go wrong if he gets low self-esteem?

Can you give instances you have been verbally abused or talked down before?
By who?

What have you learned here to help in this case?

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2048957353//UBA PLC

SEND PAYPAL: RICHMONDAKHIGBE1@GMAIL.COM



RICHMOND AKHIGBE
CHILD PSYCHO-THERAPIST (CPT)
STRATEGIST & CONSULTANT., SOSC

CREDIT: ROSEMUND OSOEGBO
EDITOR

